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GOVERNMENTAL CO-OPERATION IN INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

In an earlier number of this *Journal* the suggestion was advanced that experimental schools be made possible by grants from the federal government. These experimental schools would attack the very difficult problem of the relation of industrial training to elementary schools. The suggestion called for schools which should find the center of their interest in agriculture and in the mechanical and domestic arts.

It is evident that secondary schools can with comparative ease be adapted to industrial training. There is in Europe and this country sufficient experience in this direction to indicate the success of such institutions and the possibility of combining with the technical training considerable general education.

But little or no effort has been made to relate elementary education to industrial training. And yet it is abundantly evident that practically all the education which the bulk of people receive must be gained in the elementary schools. It is equally evident that an elementary education which should be planned with reference to later industrial training and occupation must materially assist in that training and might so interpret the process as greatly to increase the intelligence and morale of the workman.

It is true that the introduction of school gardening and manual training and some phases of domestic science into the grades is a step in this direction, but in our huge city school systems or in the poorly equipped country schools thoroughgoing experiments in these directions cannot be made. We have agricultural and manual-training high schools. Up to this time no state has attempted to organize elementary schools about agriculture or the mechanical and domestic arts; and until this is done we are likely to have no satisfactory data to guide our educational policy. It is for this reason that we have suggested that the government aid those states which will make this experiment by subsidies which would be analogous to those given to agricultural

colleges. This policy was inaugurated by the first Morrill in 1862 and has been enforced by later and more generous enactments. There is at present an amendment to this legislation before congress "to provide for the advancement of instruction in agriculture, manual training, and home economics in state normal schools of the United States." We quote below the substance of a communication from the acting secretary of the interior, Hon. Frank Pierce, with reference to this bill. The secretary recommends finally that the most practical immediate step would be to authorize the commissioner of education to make a thorough investigation of the whole field within which government aid may wisely be granted to state education.

This bill is one of several which have been introduced at this session of Congress, providing for national aid to education in the several States and particularly for national aid as regards education in agriculture, home economics, and other industrial subjects. The fact that several bills, touching in different ways upon this same subject, have been brought before Congress, is a clear indication of public interest in this matter. The principle involved in the granting of such aid to the states by the general government has already found definite lodgement in the policy of the national government, as is shown by the appropriations made under the second Morrill act of 1890, and the Nelson amendment of 1907, providing for more complete endowment and support of agricultural and mechanical colleges.

It is generally agreed that the working of this principle, in its bearing on the support of the land-grant colleges, has been extremely beneficial. One indication of the value of such appropriations is seen in the fact that they have encouraged rather than retarded the support of these state institutions by the several state governments. The information at hand in the Bureau of Education shows that in the year 1896 these land-grant colleges received in the aggregate 29 per cent. of their support from the national government. Ten years later, in 1906, owing to the increase of state appropriations, this proportion of their support from federal funds was reduced to 15.4 per cent. In this ten-year period the congressional grant was increased by 19 per cent. In the same time the amount which these institutions received from their several states was increased by about 240 per cent. Whereas in 1896 twenty-five of these institutions received more than one-half of their support from the national government, in 1906 only fifteen received more than one-half of their support from the national government. These figures show a wholesome tendency. They would seem to indicate that the granting of national aid for the promotion of education might safely be extended to other classes of institutions; provided it can be shown that there is a

national need that these institutions be advanced more rapidly in their educational efficiency than they can be advanced without such national aid.

The land-grant colleges were intended to meet what was clearly a national need, that of institutions in all of the states which should promote agricultural improvements by providing the higher grades of agricultural instruction. This has been found to be an extremely difficult undertaking. Even with the encouragement provided by the first Morrill act of 1862, the development of these institutions was painfully slow. Since the granting of an annual appropriation for their better support under the second Morrill act of 1890, their usefulness has been very rapidly extended and increased. During this period, however, industrial changes have gone forward with great rapidity, the tendency of our rural population to gravitate toward the cities has continued, and the need of a better industrial education for our city populations has been emphasized by the increasing severity of world competition. For all of these reasons the problem of a better education of an industrial type, in both country and city, has steadily become more acute. It is extremely doubtful whether these growing needs can be met in the near future in a majority of the states unless the encouragement of federal appropriations be added to the efforts of the states and of local communities. There is, however, good reason to hope that any appropriations which may be made to this end by the national government will encourage and promote such provision by states and communities as will in good measure meet the need.

Senate Bill 3,392 is concerned with the training of teachers of agricultural, domestic, and other industrial subjects, in the regularly established state normal schools. The Nelson amendment of March 4, 1907, contained a provision permitting the use of a portion of the new funds for the training of teachers in land-grant colleges. Presumably the teachers trained under this provision would for the most part become teachers in high schools and in state normal schools. There would still be need, if such instruction is to be widely extended among schools of elementary grade, that additional provision be made on a large scale for the training of teachers of elementary schools in these special subjects.

It will appear from what has been said above, that Senate Bill 3,392 seems to call for warm approval in principle. It seems proper also that the administration of any fund devoted to such purposes as those contemplated in this measure should devolve upon the Department of the Interior and be carried on through the Bureau of Education in that Department. There are, however, numerous questions to be considered in connection with this bill, and with other proposed bills closely related thereto. It is clearly important that any forward step which the national government may take in the encouragement of public education should be carefully weighed, and be given its proper place in a well digested general policy. Furthermore, the con-

ditions in the several states are widely different, and any bill should be framed with full knowledge of these differing conditions in order that it may be made sufficiently flexible to accomplish the best results in all parts of the country. It is conceivable that in some portions of the country money for the training of teachers on agriculture at the normal schools is more urgently needed at this time than money for the support of instruction in agriculture in schools of other kinds, while in other states this condition may be reversed. And still further, a wise economy in any one of the states might call for the concentration of such funds upon the training of teachers in the earlier years of the movement until a corps of competent teachers has been secured, while thereafter a larger proportion of the same funds might profitably be devoted to high schools of agriculture and the mechanic arts, a relatively smaller proportion being needed for the training of teachers. These considerations suggest the need of a thorough inquiry into the state and needs of industrial education in different parts of the country as a basis for a wise and economical appropriation of federal funds for the encouragement of such education. I respectfully recommend therefore that no appropriation be made at this time along the lines indicated by Senate Bill 3,392; but ask you carefully to consider an amendment of the Bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and substituting the following:

"That \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be found necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and made available immediately and until expended, to be used by the commissioner of education, under the direction of the secretary of the interior, in an investigation and the preparation of a report to Congress concerning the needs and best methods of distribution and administration of federal appropriations in aid of industrial, agricultural and related forms of education, such report to be made to Congress on or before January 1, 1910."

Such an investigation will make it possible for Congress to act upon bills like S. 3,392 with full knowledge of the situation and the needs of the country.

It is very much to be hoped that this amendment above suggested be passed. The federal government will then be in a position to take a deliberate and constructive attitude toward the most serious problems which industrial education is forcing upon us. The problem is so really national that national appropriations are quite as legitimate and as desirable as in the cases of agricultural colleges or experimental stations.

The commissioner of education should be able at this critical period in our educational evolution to indicate the largest and most important phases of the problem and to direct the assist-

ance of the government toward those educational experiments which can aid us in solving these problems. It will be the policy of this *Journal* to urge during the coming year the advisability of establishing such experimental schools and of the use of the grants of the federal government to forward such important experiments.

L. S. C.